

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL DISTRICTS  
9520, 9780, 9790, 9800, 9810 AND 9820  
ABUSE AND HARASSMENT REPORTING GUIDELINES  
FOR THE DISTRICT YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM  
AND CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE VRQA

**March 2018**

## Table of Contents

1	Introduction .....	1
2	Definitions.....	1
3	Volunteers.....	3
4	Club Counsellors .....	4
5	Host Families.....	4
6	Travel and Transportation .....	5
7	Student selection and screening.....	5
8	Training .....	5
9	Record keeping .....	6
10	Privacy .....	6
11	Allegation Reporting Guidelines.....	6
12	Follow-through and Review Guidelines .....	7
13	Additional District responsibilities .....	7
14	Club compliance / responsibilities.....	8
	Annexure A - SEXUAL ABUSE AND HARASSMENT ALLEGATION REPORTING.....	10
1	Introduction .....	10
2	Definitions.....	10
3	Allegation reporting guidelines .....	11
3.1	Receive the report.....	11
3.2	Protect the young person. ....	11
3.3	Report the allegations to appropriate authorities.....	11
3.4	Avoid gossip and blame. ....	12
3.5	Do not challenge the alleged offender .....	12
3.6	Follow-through procedures by District.....	12
3.7	Responding to the needs of the youth program participant.....	13
3.8	Addressing issues within the club.....	13
	Annexure B - Reportable Conduct Scheme.....	14
	Annexure 3 - Forms.....	18

## 1 INTRODUCTION

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District is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all participants in Rotary activities. It is the duty of all Rotarians, Rotarians' spouses, partners, and any other volunteers to safeguard to the best of their ability the welfare of and to prevent the physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of children and young people with whom they come into contact.

District is also committed to Aboriginal cultural safety, culturally and/or linguistically diverse cultural safety and the safety of children with a disability.

## 2 DEFINITIONS

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2.1 In this document:

- (a) **Abuse & Harassment** refers to any form of harassment defined below whether it is sexual, emotional or physical.
- (b) **Child** means a person under the age of 18 years
- (c) **Child related work** means involvement in an activity with a child in any capacity where the contact is not merely occasional and not merely incidental.  
Note: reference should be had to the Working with Children Act. It is intended that this use of the term be wider than the term as defined in the Act
- (d) **Club** means a club that is a member of Rotary International
- (e) **Club Youth Exchange committee** means those members of a Club (which has a Club Counsellor and has reached an agreement with the District Youth Exchange Committee to assume the obligation to secure Host families for all or part of a Student's participation in an exchange) that will perform that function for the Club.
- (f) **Commission** means the Commission for Children and Young People established by section 6 of the Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012
- (g) **Counsellor** is a person approved by a District and assigned to a Student to provide guidance as support to the Student and undertake a quasi guardianship role.
- (h) **District** means, as the situation requires such of:  
Rotary International District 9520 Inc A39893 (SA).  
Rotary International District 9780 Inc A0051943L (VIC).  
Rotary International District 9790 Inc A0051919P (VIC).  
Rotary International District 9800 Inc A0046132N (VIC).  
Rotary International District 9810 Inc A0053283B (VIC).  
Rotary International District 9820 Inc A0010174Z (VIC).  
as adopt this document as its own, and Clubs, as that term is used in this document are members of the District where they have been established or are maintained with the geographic territory of District.
- (i) **District Youth Exchange Committee** means the persons delegated by District to manage the District Youth Exchange Program on its behalf.

- (j) **District Youth Exchange Program** means the program by that name conducted by District. Some elements of the program are for Students who will live outside Australia. Other elements are for Students who will live in Australia.
- (k) **District Governor** means the person holding that role within District and in the event that that person is outside Australia means the Vice Governor.
- (l) **Emotional harassment** is any action or comment which unreasonably disturbs the youth/student. This includes but is not limited to repeated comments about a youth/student's social background, home country, language, culture, personal appearance or other characteristics which are offensive, embarrassing or humiliating to the student to whom they were directed.
- (m) **Host families** are family units where a Student or Students reside for a period of their exchange as member of that family unit. Each adult person who resides with the host family is expected to hold a Working with Children Check. See Clause #
- (n) **Physical Abuse** is any physical harm inflicted on a Student and includes but is not limited to:
- (i) Providing insufficient nourishment for the Student
  - (ii) Depriving the Student of a reasonable amount of sleep
  - (iii) Requiring the Student to do an unreasonable amount of work
  - (iv) Inflicting physical pain on the Student
- (o) **Privacy Principles** means the 10 National Privacy Principles (NPPs) contained in schedule 3 of the Privacy Act 1988
- (p) **Rotarian** means a person which is a member of a Club, other than an honorary member of that Club.
- (q) **Rotary International** (or RI) means the Michigan (USA) domestic corporation by that name.
- (r) **Sexual Abuse** means engaging in implicit or explicit sexual acts with a young person or forcing or encouraging a young person to engage in implicit or explicit sexual acts alone or with another person of any age, of the same or opposite gender. This includes non-touching offenses, such as indecent exposure or showing a young person sexual or pornographic material.
- (s) **Sexual Harassment**: includes sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. In some cases, sexual harassment precedes sexual abuse and is used by sexual predators to desensitize or groom their victims. Some examples of sexual harassment include:
- (i) Sexual epithets, jokes, written or spoken references to sexual conduct, talking about one's sex life in the presence of a young person, and comments about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess.
  - (ii) Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
  - (iii) Display of sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or drawings. Sexual leering or whistling, any inappropriate physical contact such as

brushing or touching, obscene language or gestures, and suggestive or insulting comments.

- (t) **Student** is an individual who is participating in a Rotary District Youth Exchange Program, regardless of whether he or she is of legal age of majority. A Student may be outbound (planning to or actually studying overseas) or inbound (studying in Australia)
- (u) **Volunteer** means any adult involved with Rotary District Youth Exchange Program activities that has direct interactions, either supervised or unsupervised, with Students and includes:
  - (i) club and district Youth Exchange officers and committee members;
  - (ii) Rotarian counsellors;
  - (iii) Rotarians and non-Rotarians and their spouses and partners who host Students for activities or outings or who might drive Students to events or functions; and
  - (iv) host parents and other adult residents of the host home, including siblings and other family members.

A Volunteer will have a current Working with Children Check

- (v) **Volunteer Declaration** means a declaration in the form of or to the effect of the "Rotary Youth Volunteer Information and Declaration Form" in Schedule A
- (w) **VRQA** means Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority established under Chapter 4 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- (x) **Working with Children Check** means an assessment made by the Secretary to the Department of Justice and Regulation that the person the subject of the assessment is suitable to undertake child related work

### **3 VOLUNTEERS**

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3.1 Each person seeking to be a Volunteer (an applicant) must:

- (a) Complete and lodge a Volunteer Declaration, including without limitation, the referees required.
- (b) Apply for a Working with Children Check, nominating District as a relevant employer
- (c) Meet RI and District eligibility requirements for working with Students.
- (d) Understand and comply with RI and District policies for youth programs.

3.2 An applicant cannot be confirmed as a Volunteer until District :

- (a) Had received evidence of the Working with Children Check, including any temporary or interim arrangements contemplated by the Working with Children Act
- (b) Is satisfied that information supplied in the Volunteer Declaration, including any information obtained as a consequence of inquiries made following receipt of the Volunteer Declaration, do not indicate the applicant is or may be unsuitable to undertake child related work
- (c) Is satisfied that the applicant:
  - (i) meets RI and District eligibility requirements for working with

## Students

- (ii) understands and will comply with RI and District policies for youth programs
- 3.3 The confirmation of a person as a Volunteer may be withdrawn or suspended at any time, with or without notice and without a right to insist on a review.

***It should be noted*** that RI policy prohibits any volunteer who has admitted to, been convicted of, or otherwise been found to have engaged in abuse or harassment from working with youth in a Rotary context.

*If an individual is accused of abuse or harassment and the investigation into the claim is inconclusive, additional safeguards must be put in place to ensure the protection of any youth with whom the individual may have future contact as well as for the protection of the accused. A person later cleared of charges may apply to be reinstated to participate in youth programs.*

*Reinstatement is not a right, and no guarantee is made that he or she will be reinstated to his or her former position.*

#### **4 CLUB COUNSELLORS**

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- 4.1 Club Counsellors must
- (a) be both a Rotarian and a Volunteer; but
  - (b) not be a member of the Student's host family.
- 4.2 Club Counsellors must be trained by District in responding to a variety of problems or concerns that may arise during the exchange, including instances of abuse or harassment.

#### **5 HOST FAMILIES**

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- 5.1 Each adult member of a Host family and other members of the extended family who are permanent or part-time residents in the home must complete a Working with Children Check, nominating District as a relevant employer.
- 5.2 Host families must complete a written application.
- 5.3 Host families must undergo a comprehensive interview that determines their suitability for hosting students.
- 5.4 Host families must demonstrate:
- (a) Commitment to the safety and security of Students.
  - (b) Motivation for hosting a student consistent with Rotary ideals of international understanding and cultural exchange.
  - (c) Financial ability to provide adequate accommodations (room and board) for the student.
  - (d) Ability to provide appropriate supervision and parental responsibility that ensures the student's well-being.
- 5.5 Home visits must be conducted for each family and should include announced and unannounced visits, both before and during the placement. Home visits must be conducted annually, even for repeat host families.

## **6 TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION**

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- 6.1 The rights of a Student to travel, and the obligations on a Student seeking to travel and travelling are spelled out in the guide as published from time.
- 6.2 All travel, other than day to day local activities, requires the obtaining of permission and the provision of information in relation to that travel.
- 6.3 It is recommended practice that in the circumstances where there is just the Student and driver only in a vehicle, that such transport is restricted to the immediate area of the community, and such person shall be an approved driver with no less than one year's driving experience.

## **7 STUDENT SELECTION AND SCREENING**

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- 7.1 Young people interested in participating in the Rotary District Youth Exchange Program must meet these requirements:
  - (a) Complete a written application and be interviewed by Club and District to determine suitability for participation in the program.
  - (b) Attend and participate in all District orientation and training sessions.
- 7.2 Parents or legal guardians of young people interested in participating in the District Youth Exchange program must be interviewed to determine the person's suitability for participation in the program.
- 7.3 Students applying for other Rotary youth programs must meet the requirements as determined by the relevant program committee.

## **8 TRAINING**

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- 8.1 District is required to provide abuse and harassment training to all Clubs.
- 8.2 District will develop and maintain a training calendar that defines the participants, frequency of training required for each volunteer position, and training methods to be used.
- 8.3 The District Trainer and the District Protection Officer will ensure the training sessions are conducted.
- 8.4 District shall provide specialized training sessions on the District Youth Exchange Program for:
  - (a) District Governor.
  - (b) Assistant governors.
  - (c) Members of the District Youth Exchange Committee.
  - (d) Members of a Club Youth Exchange Committee.
  - (e) Club Counsellors.
  - (f) Other Rotarians and non-Rotarians who participate in Youth Exchange activities, such as local tours or district events.
  - (g) Host families.
  - (h) Students (outbound and inbound).
  - (i) Parents and legal guardians of students.

- 8.5 District will establish guidelines to ensure that all participants have received the requisite training
- 8.6 To support the training District will adapt the Abuse and Harassment Prevention Training Manual and Leader's Guide to incorporate specific district guidelines, information on local customs and cultural issues, and legal requirements.

## **9 RECORD KEEPING**

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- 9.1 In accordance with its Privacy Policy, District shall maintain:
- (a) a register of Volunteer Declarations and Working with Children checks and other information about Volunteers and those seeking to be Volunteers;
  - (b) Records of training conducted; and
  - (c) Information about Students
- 9.2 The information shall be kept secure by the District Governor or as directed by the District Governor and in such form as the District Governor determines from time to time. At this time:
- (a) Physical documentation is retained by the District Secretary or the Secretary of a Committee undertaking administration of a task for District; and
  - (b) Access to Electronic records is restricted with access assigned with reference to the role of the person who has access. Permissions are removed or varied as roles change.
  - (c) Each person obtaining copy documents has been directed to securely destroy documents no longer required.

## **10 PRIVACY**

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- 10.1 District is not bound by the Privacy Principles. However, in broad compliance with the Privacy Principles, District :
- (a) Endeavors only to collect information sufficient to perform its functions and fulfil its legal obligations.
  - (b) Intends only to use and disseminate that information to perform its functions and fulfil its legal obligations.
  - (c) Reserves the right to dispose of information that it does not require to perform its functions and fulfil its legal obligations, recognizing that the obligation to maintain and keep up to date information that is not required is onerous and with no tangible benefit.
  - (d) Will permit individuals to have access to personal information held about them, and to update and correct that information if wrong, inaccurate or out of date.
  - (e) Restricts access to the information held by it about individuals to those who require access to it to fulfil their functions.
  - (f) Prefers to store that information in Australia.

## **11 ALLEGATION REPORTING GUIDELINES**

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District is committed to protecting the safety and well-being of Students and will not tolerate abuse or harassment. All allegations of abuse or harassment will be taken



seriously. Sexual Abuse and Harassment allegations must be handled in accordance with the Sexual Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines. (Appendix1)

## **12 FOLLOW-THROUGH AND REVIEW GUIDELINES**

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District takes all allegations of abuse or harassment seriously and shall ensure that each allegation is investigated thoroughly. District will cooperate with the Commission, VQRA, the police and all other child protective services and will not interfere with other investigations when conducting its own independent reviews.

## **13 ADDITIONAL DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES**

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District will:

- 13.1 Establish procedures for reporting, investigating, and handling non-criminal offences or historical cases that law enforcement chooses not to investigate.
- 13.2 Recommend that all inbound Students maintain insurance at the following minimums levels:
  - (a) Overseas Medical US\$1,000,000
  - (b) Accidental Death US\$25,000
  - (c) Capital Benefits US\$100,000
  - (d) Emergency Evacuation US\$100,000
  - (e) Legal Liability US\$5,000,000
  - (f) Provide each Student with a list of local services in the district (rape and suicide crisis hot lines, alcohol and drug awareness programs for teenagers, relevant law enforcement hot lines, alcohol and drug awareness programs for teenagers, relevant law enforcement agencies, community services, private services, etc.).
  - (g) Complete a student data request form for all participating Students and return it to RI one month before the exchange begins.
  - (h) Provide a 24-hour emergency contact phone number to Students.
  - (i) Follow RI guidelines for youth exchange websites.
  - (j) Appoint an independent lawyer, therapist, or counsellor to represent any alleged victim in cases of sexual abuse and harassment.
  - (k) Report all criminal allegations to RI within 72 hours. (It is noted that the Sexual Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines require notification to the Commission, VQRA and police and possibly other external authorities and that in most cases the report obligation is greater)
  - (l) Report all serious incidents (accidents, crimes, early returns, death) involving Youth Exchange students to RI within 72 hours.
  - (m) Evaluate and review this policy and accompanying procedures regularly.
  - (n) Appoint a district review committee to evaluate and review files, policies, and allegations annually.
  - (o) Appoint a District Compliance/Protection Officer.
  - (p) Require a monthly report from each inbound and outbound exchange student in the district that includes information on current hosts, feelings, concerns,

ideas, and suggestions. The district Youth Exchange chair can then review the reports and assist students as needed.

- (q) Consider designating a mobile phone as a permanent district hotline. Assign a Rotarian in the district to be on-call for a given period and carry the phone 24 hours a day.

(Rotary Information Line 9654 5872)

## **14 CLUB COMPLIANCE / RESPONSIBILITIES**

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- 14.1 District will monitor all Clubs within the district and ensure that they comply with Sexual Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines. as well as RI guidelines. If not coordinated or implemented by a District, clubs will be required to carry out the following duties under 14.2 to 14.3 inclusive.
- 14.2 All clubs that wish to apply to the district for approval to host as Student must provide District with a copy of the following for review and approval:
  - (a) All materials produced in the club to promote and support the District Youth Exchange Program, including promotional materials and brochures, applications, policies, Web site links, etc.
  - (b) List of services in the area (rape and suicide crisis hotlines, alcohol and drug Awareness programs for teenagers, relevant law enforcement agencies, community services, private services, etc.)
  - (c) Club abuse and harassment prevention training program materials.
- 14.3 A Club that participated in the District Youth Exchange Program must agree to carry out the following:
  - (a) Complete and return a signed compliance statement that the club is operating its program in accordance with District and RI policies.
  - (b) If not coordinated by the district, conduct Police checks and reference checks for all volunteers involved with the program, including, but not limited to, adult residents of host home, counsellor, club chair, and all Rotarians and their spouses or partners with direct unsupervised contact with youth. All volunteers must complete and sign the Youth Volunteer Declaration.
  - (c) Develop a comprehensive system for host family selection and screening that includes announced and unannounced home visits and interviews both before and during the placement.
  - (d) Conduct follow-up evaluations of both students and host families.
  - (e) Follow the Sexual Abuse and Harassment Reporting Guidelines.
  - (f) Prohibit direct placement of students outside of the District Youth Exchange program structure (so-called backdoor exchanges).
  - (g) Set procedures for removal of a Student from the host family, including establishing criteria for moving a Student and locating available back-up temporary housing in advance.
  - (h) Develop contingency hosting plans that include pre-screened, available back-up families.
  - (i) Ensure that all hosting is voluntary. Parents of outbound Students and club members must not be required to host inbound Students.

- (j) Ensure that long-term Students have multiple host families.
- (k) Provide each Student with a comprehensive local services list, including information for dentists, doctors, places of worship, counsellors, suicide and rape crisis hotlines, etc.
- (l) Ensure that the Club Counsellor for each Student is not a member of the student's host family.
- (m) Ensure that the Club Counsellor is trained in responding to any problems or concerns that may arise during the exchange, including the prevention of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse or harassment.
- (n) Provide mandatory training on abuse and harassment prevention for host families, outbound Students, inbound Students, and their parents or legal guardians.

## Annexure A - SEXUAL ABUSE AND HARASSMENT ALLEGATION REPORTING

### 1 INTRODUCTION

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- 1.1 District and Rotary International are committed to protecting the safety and well-being of all youth program participants and will not tolerate their abuse or harassment. All allegations of abuse or harassment will be taken seriously and must be handled within the following guidelines. The safety and well-being of young people must always be the first priority.
- 1.2 The District Youth Exchange Program is one to which the Reportable Conduct Scheme applies and all Clubs are affected by the Scheme while participating in the Program. A summary of the Reportable Conduct Scheme can be found at Annexure 2. The Guidelines below incorporate the obligations of the participants under the Scheme and the obligations of District.
- 1.3 This document is substantially the same as District's process for reporting and responding to allegations in all youth and child activities. Additional obligations apply where a person affected is an exchange student.

### 2 DEFINITIONS

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- (a) **Commission** means the Commission for Children and Young People established by section 6 of the Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012
- (b) **Sexual Abuse** means engaging in implicit or explicit sexual acts with a young person or forcing or encouraging a young person to engage in implicit or explicit sexual acts alone or with another person of any age, of the same or opposite gender. This includes non-touching offenses, such as indecent exposure or showing a young person sexual or pornographic material.
- (c) **Sexual Harassment:** includes sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. In some cases, sexual harassment precedes sexual abuse and is used by sexual predators to desensitize or groom their victims. Some examples of sexual harassment include:
  - (i) Sexual epithets, jokes, written or spoken references to sexual conduct, talking about one's sex life in the presence of a young person, and comments about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess.
  - (ii) Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
  - (iii) Display of sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or drawings. Sexual leering or whistling, any inappropriate physical contact such as brushing or touching, obscene language or gestures, and suggestive or insulting comments.
- (d) **Student** is an individual who is participating in a Rotary District Youth Exchange Program, regardless of whether he or she is of legal age of majority. A Student may be outbound (planning to or actually studying overseas) or inbound (studying in Australia)
- (e) **VRQA** means Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority established

under Chapter 4 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006

### **3 ALLEGATION REPORTING GUIDELINES**

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#### **Who should determine if it is sexual abuse or sexual harassment?**

Upon hearing allegations, if you think that the alleged conduct does or might constitute abuse or harassment that is sexual in nature then this policy applies to that allegation unless proved otherwise. After ensuring the safety of the student, the adult should immediately report the allegations to appropriate child protection or law enforcement authorities. In some countries, this reporting is required by law.

Any adult to whom a Rotary youth program participant reports an allegation of sexual abuse or harassment must follow these reporting guidelines:

#### **3.1 Receive the report.**

- (a) Listen attentively and stay calm. Acknowledge that it takes a lot of courage to report sexual abuse or sexual harassment. Be encouraging; do not express shock, horror, or disbelief.
- (b) Assure privacy but not confidentiality. Explain that you will have to tell someone about the abuse/harassment in order to make it stop and ensure that it doesn't happen to others.
- (c) Get the facts, but don't interrogate. Ask questions that establish facts: who, what, when, where, and how. Reassure the young person that he or she did the right thing in telling you. Avoid asking "why" questions, which may be interpreted as questioning the young person's motives. Remember that your responsibility is to present the story to the proper authorities.
- (d) Be nonjudgmental and reassure. Avoid criticizing anything that has happened or anyone who may be involved. It's especially important not to blame or criticize the young person. Emphasize that the situation was not his or her fault and that it was brave and mature to come to you.
- (e) Document the allegation. Make a written record of the conversation, including the date and time, as soon after the report as you can. Try to use the young person's words and record only what he or she told you.

#### **3.2 Protect the young person.**

- (a) Ensure the safety and well-being of the youth program participant by removing him or her from the situation immediately and preventing all contact with the alleged abuser or harasser.
- (b) Reassure the youth that this is being done for his or her safety and is not a punishment.

#### **3.3 Report the allegations to appropriate authorities**

- (a) Immediately report all cases of sexual abuse or harassment. It is assumed that any such conduct is covered by the Reportable Conduct Scheme and reports should be made to:
  - (i) The Police. If concerned about the immediate safety of the child, call the 24 hour Child Protection Crisis Line 131278
  - (ii) The Commission (unless you are certain that the participant is 18 years or older). Reports to the Commission are made on the Commission's website at: <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/reportable-conduct->

[scheme/notify-and-update/](#)

or by phone to: (03) 8601 5281

or by email: [childsafestandards@ccyp.vic.gov.au](mailto:childsafestandards@ccyp.vic.gov.au)

Note: If a report is made to the Commission, the District Governor also has a personal obligation to make a report in respect of the same allegation. Please bring your report to the attention of the District Governor and do not rely on the report you make being brought to the attention of the District Governor.

The VRQA (if you believe that the person is an (exchange) Student). Reports to the VRQA are made by email to:

[vrqa.student.exchange@vrqa.vic.gov.au](mailto:vrqa.student.exchange@vrqa.vic.gov.au)

(iii) then to the Club and District leadership for follow-through

- (b) In most situations, the first Rotary contact is the Club Counsellor who is responsible for seeking the advice of appropriate agencies and interacting with them. If the allegation involves the conduct of this Rotarian, the district youth program chair or District Governor should be the first Rotary contact.

District will cooperate with police, the Commission, VRQA, RI and any other legal investigations.

### **3.4 Avoid gossip and blame.**

Don't tell anyone about the report other than those required by the guidelines. Be careful to protect the rights of both the victim and the accused during the investigation.

### **3.5 Do not challenge the alleged offender.**

- (a) Don't contact the alleged offender. In cases of abuse, interrogation must be left entirely to law enforcement authorities.
- (b) In cases of noncriminal harassment, the district governor is responsible for follow-through and will contact the alleged offender after the young person has been moved to a safe environment. The district governor may designate this task to a district youth protection officer or district review committee.

### **3.6 Follow-through procedures by District**

Either the district youth programs chair or district youth protection officer must ensure that the following steps are taken immediately after an abuse allegation is reported.

- (a) Confirm that the youth program participant has been removed from the situation immediately and has no contact with the alleged abuser or harasser.
- (b) Ensure notification to the District Governor promptly as the DG has three business days in which to report to the Commission and 72 hours in which to report to RI
- (c) If law enforcement agencies will not investigate, or where the investigation is complete, the District Governor has investigation and reporting obligations to the Commission. The DG may assign the investigation obligations to the district youth protection officer or district review committee should coordinate an independent review of the allegations.
- (d) Ensure that the student receives immediate support services.

- (e) Offer the young person an independent, non-Rotarian counsellor to represent his or her interests. Ask social services or law enforcement to recommend someone who is not a Rotarian or in any way involved with the youth program.
- (f) Contact the Student's parents or legal guardian. If the student is away from home, the Student and his or her parents should decide whether to stay in country or return home. If the student stays in country, written authorization from the student's parents or legal guardian is required. If the student and the student's parents choose for the student to return home, consult with police before making travel arrangements. If an investigation is pending, the police may not approve of the student leaving the country.
- (g) Remove alleged abuser or harasser from all contact with any other young participants in Rotary programs and activities while investigations are conducted.
- (h) Cooperate with the police or legal investigation, including those of the Commission and the VROA.
- (i) After the authorities have completed their investigation, the district must follow through to make sure the situation is being addressed. Specifically, District will conduct an independent and thorough review of any allegations of sexual abuse or harassment.

### **Post allegation report considerations**

#### **3.7 Responding to the needs of the youth program participant.**

- (a) District will adopt a cohesive and managed team approach to supporting a young person after an allegation report. The youth program participant is likely to feel embarrassed or confused and may become withdrawn.
- (b) After a report of harassment or abuse, students may have mixed feelings about remaining on their exchange. If they do choose to stay, they may or may not want to continue their relationship with their hosting Rotary club. In some cases, a student may wish to remain in country but change to a different host club.
- (c) Although club members and host families may have trouble understanding how the student is feeling, the student would find it helpful to know that the club continues to be reassuring and supportive.
- (d) Club members and host families may feel ambivalent about their roles and unclear about their boundaries. However, they need to do whatever is necessary to reassure the student of their support at all times.

#### **3.8 Addressing issues within the club**

- (a) When addressing an allegation of abuse or harassment, the most important concern is the safety of youth.
- (b) Club members should not speculate or offer personal opinions that could potentially hinder any police or criminal investigations. Rotarians must not become involved in investigations.
- (c) Making comments about alleged victims in support of alleged abusers violates both the Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth and Rotary ideals.
- (d) Comments made against an alleged abuser could lead to a defamation claim filed against Rotarians or clubs by the alleged abuser.

## Annexure B - Reportable Conduct Scheme

What is it?

The Reportable Conduct Scheme is mandated under the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005. It applies to a number of activities undertaken with the District.

For District, it applies to the youth exchange program and to Rotary activities that provide overnight camps to children, where provided as part of the entity's primary activity

It imposes an obligation on the head of an entity to report reportable allegations and reportable conduct, and to follow up on on reported matters.

Strict time limits apply, and there are penalties for non-compliance

Note:

The reportable conduct scheme does not apply to an entity that does not exercise care, supervision or authority over children, whether as part of its primary activity or otherwise

HOWEVER, if it applies to an entity, it applies to all its activities, not just the role or activity that caused the Scheme to apply.

### Definitions

**Commission** means the Commission for Children and Young People established by section 6 of the Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012;

**Employee** includes a person over the age of 18 and engaged by the entity to provide services, including as a volunteer, contractor, office holder or officer, whether or not the person provides services to children;

**Employment** is not defined but would include tasks performed as a volunteer

**Entity** includes an entity that conducts a student exchange program and overnight camps for children as part of its primary activity

**Head** in relation to an entity includes the chief executive officer or the principal officer of the entity.

**reportable allegation** means any information that leads a person to form a reasonable belief that an employee has committed—

- (a) reportable conduct; or
- (b) misconduct that may involve reportable conduct—

whether or not the conduct or misconduct is alleged to have occurred within the course of the person's employment;

**reportable conduct** means—

- (a) a sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, whether or not a criminal proceeding in relation to the offence has been commenced or concluded; or
- (b) sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of, a child; or
- (c) physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child; or
- (d) any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child; or
- (e) significant neglect of a child;

### Structural obligations of the head of an entity

The head of an entity must have in place:



- a. a system for preventing the commission of reportable conduct by an employee of the entity within the course of the person's employment; and
- b. a system for enabling any person, including an employee of the entity, to notify the head of the entity of a reportable allegation of which the person becomes aware; and
- c. a system for enabling any person, including an employee of the entity, to notify the Commission of a reportable allegation involving the head of the entity of which the person becomes aware; and
- d. a system for investigating and responding to a reportable allegation against an employee of the entity.

### **The prevention system**

The District Youth Participation Policy is the cornerstone of the prevention system. It provides for the verification and recording of

- a. Working with Children Check status
- b. Proof of personal identity
- c. History of work involving children
- d. References that address suitability for working with children and the task to be performed

### **Notification obligations of the head of the entity**

If the head of an entity becomes aware of a reportable allegation against an employee of the entity, the head must notify the Commission in writing of the following—

1. within 3 business days after becoming aware of the reportable allegation—
  - a. that a reportable allegation has been made against an employee of the entity; and
  - b. the name (including any former name and alias, if known) and date of birth, if known, of the employee concerned; and
  - c. whether Victoria Police has been contacted about the reportable allegation; and
  - d. the name, address and telephone number of the entity; and
  - e. the name of the head of the entity; and
2. as soon as practicable and within 30 days after becoming aware of the reportable allegation—
  - a. detailed information about the reportable allegation; and
  - b. whether or not the entity proposes to take any disciplinary or other action in relation to the employee and the reasons why it intends to take, or not to take, that action; and
  - c. any written submissions made to the head of the entity concerning the reportable allegation that the employee wished to have considered in determining what, if any, disciplinary or other action should be taken in relation to the employee.

### **Investigation obligations of the head of an entity**

As soon as practicable after the head of an entity becomes aware of a reportable allegation against an employee of the entity, the head must—

- a. investigate the reportable allegation or permit a regulator, or an independent investigator engaged by the entity or regulator, to investigate the reportable allegation; and
- b. inform the Commission of the identity of the body or person who will conduct the investigation.

### **Police involvement**

1. On becoming aware that a reportable allegation may involve criminal conduct, the Commission, an entity, a regulator or an independent investigator must report the matter to Victoria Police.
2. On becoming aware that Victoria Police is investigating a reportable allegation, the Commission, an entity, a regulator or an independent investigator must not commence or continue to investigate the reportable allegation under this Part until the Chief Commissioner of Police—
  - a. advises that the police investigation has been completed; or
  - b. agrees that the investigation under this Part may proceed in consultation with Victoria Police.

## **The District's System in response to and in compliance with the Reportable Conduct Scheme**

District accepts that the Reportable Conduct Scheme applies to District in respect of all its activities.

The head of the entity is the District Governor

### **Reporting**

Any person who becomes aware of a reportable allegation about a District officer, Rotarian or Volunteer is encouraged to make a report or the allegation to the District Governor by send a report to the email address of the District Governor as appears in the directory maintained by District.

**reportable allegation** is any information that leads a person to form a reasonable belief that an employee has committed—

- (a) reportable conduct; or
- (b) misconduct that may involve reportable conduct—

whether or not the conduct or misconduct is alleged to have occurred within the course of the person's employment;

**reportable conduct** is—

- (a) a sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, whether or not a criminal proceeding in relation to the offence has been commenced or concluded; or
- (b) sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of, a child; or
- (c) physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child; or

(d) any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child; or

(e) significant neglect of a child;

**Volunteer** is any adult involved in a paid or volunteer role in a District activity.

If concerned that the reportable allegation involves an allegation against the District Governor, or concerned that the allegation may not be adequately responded to in accordance with the reportable conduct scheme, the report should be made to the Commission for Children and Young People at the following web page:

<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/reportable-conduct-scheme/notify-and-update/>

or by phone to: (03) 8601 5281

or by email: [childsafestandards@ccyp.vic.gov.au](mailto:childsafestandards@ccyp.vic.gov.au)

### **Investigating**

The District Governor will assign the investigation, unless it appears otherwise inappropriate, to the District Director - Governance:

### **Outcome**

Note the District Governor has an obligation under law to report the outcome of the investigation to the Commission and no obligation to report the outcome to the person who makes the report.

If a person making the report seeks further information concerning the action taken following the report the enquiry should be addressed to the Commission, at the contact points given above.

**Annexure 3 - Forms**

## Club Protection Officer Check List and Declaration

(To be forwarded to District by end April)

### Outbound Student

### Check

The club applied for, and received certification from District to sponsor an exchange student	Yes / No
The student and student's parents/guardians separately received a thorough briefing by the club.	Yes / No
The club selected a suitable counsellor in accordance with certification requirements.	Yes / No
The counsellor communicated regularly with the student, and was of support in respect of the student's preparation prior to departure.	Yes / No
The counsellor maintained regular communication with the student whilst overseas and reported the student's activities to the club.	Yes / No
The student attended the district debrief upon return.	Yes / No
If the student claimed that they had suffered a molestation occurrence, did the club handle the matter in accordance with Rotary International's "Sexual Abuse and Harassment allegation Reporting Guidelines"?	Yes / No
<b>Comments</b>	

### Inbound Student

The club applied for, and received certification from District to host a student from overseas.	Yes / No
The club selected, briefed, checked and approved suitable host families in accordance with certification requirements and was satisfied that they were happy to host.	Yes / No
The club has received and filed the host family Volunteer Declaration and Police clearance.	Yes / No
The club selected a suitable counsellor in accordance with certification requirements.	Yes / No
The club has received and filed the counsellor's Volunteer Declaration and Police clearance.	Yes / No
The counsellor has been in regular contact and support to the student.	Yes / No
If the student claimed that they had suffered a molestation occurrence, did the club handle the matter in accordance with Rotary International's "Sexual abuse and Harassment allegation Reporting Guidelines"?	Yes / No
<b>Comments</b>	

### Declaration

I, \_\_\_\_\_ the Club Protection Officer of the  
 Rotary Club of \_\_\_\_\_

Declare that I have carefully checked the tasks relating to the listed statements in this document and confirm that they have been satisfactorily completed.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Inbound YEP Student Club Check List and Compliance Statement**

### **Host Families**

### **Check**

All Host Families will be visited, briefed, and interviewed in their homes and their suitability confirmed.	Yes / No
All Host Family members over the age of 18 years will be reference checked and checked by way of a Volunteer Declaration and Police clearance as applicable.	Yes / No
Comments:	

### **Club Counsellor**

Has completed a Volunteer Declaration and obtained a Police clearance as applicable. References will be checked confirming suitability.	Yes / No
Is of the same sex as the student, or alternatively a suitable assistant has been appointed.	Yes / No
Is aware of and understands their duty and responsibility towards the student and agrees to carry out these duties.	Yes / No
Agrees to attend required District YEP training sessions.	Yes / No
Will not be a member of a Host Family.	Yes / No
The club youth committee is satisfied that the counsellor will exercise impartiality in relation to any dispute arising between the student and Host Family.	Yes / No
Comments:	



# Rotary Youth Volunteer Information and Declaration Form

(Mandatory Requirement)

## Personal Details

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Work: \_\_\_\_\_ Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Period at this Address (Years): \_\_\_\_\_ Are you a Rotarian: Yes /No

If Yes, Name of Club: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Joined: \_\_\_\_\_

What will be your role in the Program?

District Committee Member  
Club Counselor

Member of Host Family  
Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Previous involvement with Youth: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Personal References** (Only one referee may be a Rotarian and none may be family members)

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Work: \_\_\_\_\_ Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Work: \_\_\_\_\_ Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Work: \_\_\_\_\_ Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Working With Children Card Number: \_\_ Expiry Date: \_\_ Prohibited Employment Declaration Signed Y/N

### ***I certify the following:***

- All statements and information given on this form are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.
- I have never committed or been guilty or been accused of a crime against a child or young person of which I have not been cleared.
- I give my full permission for any of the people I have listed on this Form to be contacted by an authorised Rotary Officer to confirm my suitability as a Youth Exchange Volunteer.
- I certify that I have contacted my referees and all are happy for Rotary to contact them.
- I agree to abide unreservedly by the decision of the District's Rotary club reviewing my applications to my suitability as a Youth Exchange Volunteer.
- I have read the attached Code of Conduct and agree to adhere to its terms.

**I have read and understood the above declaration and sign this form voluntarily.**

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name Printed: \_\_\_\_\_

Rotary Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name printed: \_\_\_\_\_



# Code of conduct

## **1. Overview**

Victoria has compulsory minimum standards that will apply to organisations that provide services for children to help protect children from all forms of abuse. The Child Safe Standards require organisations that provide services for children to have a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.

This code of conduct outlines the expected standards for appropriate behaviour with and in the company of children, including online conduct.

## **2. The code**

### **(i) Code requirements**

All members of the Rotary District 9800 Youth Exchange Committee (*YEC*) and all other volunteers involved in the Rotary District 9800 Youth Exchange program, who are all collectively called for the purposes of this code of conduct “YEX Members”, are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as set out in this code.

YEX Members are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse.
- treating everyone with respect.
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another.
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with Aboriginal, culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination), in addition to the safety of children with a disability
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child.
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the YEC Chairman and ensure that any allegation is reported to the police.
- reporting any child safety concerns to the YEC Chairman.
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child is safe.
- encouraging children to “have a say” and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.

### **(ii) Code prohibitions**

YEX members shall not

- develop a relationship with children that could be interpreted as favouritism.
- exhibit behaviour with children which may be construed as unnecessary physical contact.
- put children at risk of abuse.
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children.
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children.
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children.
- discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability.

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

### **(iii) What to do when an allegation of child abuse is made**

Any adult to whom a student reports an allegation of sexual abuse or harassment must follow the reporting guidelines in the Rotary District 9800 Youth Abuse and Harassment Prevention Policy (Sexual Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines)

#### **Post allegation report considerations**

##### **Responding to the needs of the youth program participant**

District 9800 will adopt a cohesive and managed team approach to supporting a student after an allegation report. The student is likely to feel embarrassed or confused and may become withdrawn.

After a report of harassment or abuse, students may have mixed feelings about remaining on their exchange. If they do choose to stay, they may or may not want to continue their relationship with their hosting Rotary club. In some cases, a student may wish to remain in country but change to a different host club.

Although club members and host families may have trouble understanding how the student is feeling, the student would find it helpful to know that the club continues to be reassuring and supportive.

Club members and host families may feel ambivalent about their roles and unclear about their boundaries. However, they need to do whatever is necessary to reassure the student of their support at all times.

##### **Addressing issues within the Host Club**

When addressing an allegation of abuse or harassment, the most important concern is the safety of the student and Host Club members must not speculate or offer personal opinions that could potentially hinder any police or criminal investigations; members must not become involved in investigations.

Making comments about an alleged victim in support of an alleged abuser violates both the Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth and Rotary ideals. Comments made against an alleged abuser could lead to legal proceedings against a Rotarian or Host Club.

By observing these standards the Member acknowledges his or her responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to the YEC Chairman or if that is not appropriate, the District Governor of District 9800 .



## YEP Counsellor Selection Guide

All Counsellors will provide a Volunteer Declaration and evidence of the Police clearance in accordance with State and Territory legislation and undergo personal interviews carried out by authorized male and female representatives of the club.

The duties of a counsellor commence upon the intent to select an outbound student, or the acceptance by a club of an inbound student.

### Candidate Assessment Categories

Was the candidate enthusiastic?	YES / NO
Was the candidate keen to learn about their role and responsibilities?	YES / NO
Were you satisfied that the candidate has the ability to interact with young people?	YES / NO
Did the candidate demonstrate an understanding of Rotary's ideals in relation to the Youth Exchange Program?	YES / NO
Does the candidate have the support of the club?	YES / NO
COMMENTS:	

### Referee Assessment Categories

Did the referees enthusiastically recommend the candidates suitability?	YES / NO
Did the referees consider the candidate was genuinely prepared to undertake the role?	YES / NO
Were there any issues in relation to the candidate's attitude particularly to those of opposite sex?	YES / NO
Were the referees satisfied that the candidate wanted to volunteer for the correct reasons?	YES / NO
Were there any negative responses in relation to any aspect of the candidate to undertake the role of a Counsellor?	YES / NO
COMMENTS:	

### Result of interview

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Suitable: YES / NO

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Candidate Assessment Category Interview Notes

<b>Enthusiasm:</b>
<b>Appreciation of Role Responsibilities:</b>
<b>Ability to Interact with Young People:</b>
<b>Understanding of RI's Youth Exchange Program Objectives and Expectations:</b>
<b>Club Support:</b>

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Authorised Club Officer

Name of Authorised Club Officer: \_\_\_\_\_

I \_\_\_\_\_ President, RC of \_\_\_\_\_  
 verify that \_\_\_\_\_ has complied with the declaration  
 requirements and reference checks have been examined, and the club finds the applicant to be a  
 suitable Counsellor.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Club President      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## YEP Host Family Selection Guide

Potential Host families should be interviewed at their place of residence as an opportunity to assess the suitability of the home. It is recommended that the interview be carried out by a male and female representative of the club.

### Family Assessment Categories

Was the family enthusiastic?	YES / NO
Was the family keen to learn of their obligations and commitments including the completion of the Volunteer Declaration and Police clearance?	YES / NO
Were you satisfied that their financial situation was such that they could afford to host an exchange student?	YES / NO
Were you satisfied that the bedroom and bathroom facilities were suitable?	YES / NO
Could satisfactory arrangements be made for the student to travel to and from school?	YES / NO
Were you satisfied that the student would be accepted as part of the family?	YES / NO
COMMENTS:	

### Referee Assessment Categories

Did the referees enthusiastically support the family's application to host?	YES / NO
Did the referees consider the family to have the ability to ensure that the student would obey family rules and requirements?	YES / NO
Were there any issues in relation to the family's attitude particularly to those of opposite sex?	YES / NO
Did the referees consider that the family would offer a stable environment?	YES / NO
Were the referees satisfied that the family wanted to host for the correct reasons?	YES / NO
Were there any negative responses in relation to any aspect of the potential host family's ability or willingness to host?	YES / NO
COMMENTS:	

### Result of interview

Family Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Family Suitable: YES / NO

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Record of Reference Checks

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Enthusiasm:**

**Appreciation of Role Responsibilities:**

**Home Assessment (Bedroom & Bathroom):**

**School Travel Arrangements:**

**Whole Family Support:**

Relevant Working With Children (WWC) check documentation sighted: YES / NO

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
                    Authorised Club Officer

Name of Authorised Club Officer: \_\_\_\_\_

I \_\_\_\_\_ President, RC of \_\_\_\_\_  
verify that the \_\_\_\_\_ family has complied with the declaration  
requirements, reference and relevant WWC documents have been examined, and the club finds the  
applicants to be a suitable Host Family.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Club President      Date: \_\_\_\_\_